

Little Problems of Married Life

By WILLIAM GEORGE JORDAN

WHEN THE FAMILY INTERFERES.

Many a good matrimonial ship, with its sunlit cargo of happiness and hope, has been wrecked on the rocks of family interference. If it were customary to erect tombstones to the memory of dead loves the cause of the death of marital happiness in thousands of homes might be given in the chiseled epitaph: "Died From an Overdose of the Interference of Relatives!"

If there be one place in the world where the justice of "home rule" should be unquestioned, that place is—the home. Marriage makes the couple a new firm, an independent partnership, not a branch house under the management of a parent company.

It was interference and bad advice that spoiled the first marriage, started the first quarrel, and broke up the first home in the world in those early days, long, long ago when Eden was the only spot on earth that had even a name. This was the first lesson to man and now after thirty centuries some people have not learned it yet. Husband and wife must work out their own problems in their own way.

The problems of two must be solved by two. They need only kindness, sympathy, a reserve of help in emergencies and a free open field all the time. There is no justification for gossip, criticism, complaint, condemnation and incendiary meddling by members of the family. These things should be put on the list of unnecessary luxuries in the home and gently, firmly, definitely cut off.

We may sometimes be privileged to help others to live their lives; it is arrogant assumption for us to attempt to live their lives for them. We are told that we should not bury our talents, but there is one talent—that of special aptness for impertinent management of the affairs of others—that we should carefully wrap in a napkin and on some dark night, quietly bury forever.

It is in the first years of married life that foreign interference is most trying and dangerous and it is this very time when it is most conspicuous and dominant. No need for the family to remind the wife that the husband is not eighteen karat, that he will never make a fortune, that they fear gently—and then let their fear expand into a long catalogue of detail that fades away into the dim perspective of the unspoken. After the goods are bought and sent home and cannot be returned, what is the use of discouraging the purchaser?

The wife may think she has the finest little home in the world; everything seems beautiful to her and she has even pride in the array of cooking utensils, dazling and new in aluminum and tin, and the dishes ranged carefully on the pantry shelves. She often stands at the door and smiles as she looks in—to get the general effect at a glance. When the family makes a tour of inspection, her indiscreet sister may say, "Oh, what a mite of a kitchen. You can only wash the small dishes like cups and saucers in a little box like this." It had never seemed small to her, none of the rooms seemed small; they held so much love and hope and happiness that the size did not count; but now her heart sinks, and the joy note seems gone and a cloud comes over it all and she begins to compare her home with that of some friend and it suffers. She thinks of all the other deficiencies pointed out by the visiting inspectors. She tries to be brave so she will be smiling when he comes home but it is hard to keep back the tears.

When her husband's sister tells her in confidence, "Just to put you on your guard so you will know how to handle him," what a temper he has, it comes to her as a surprise and a grief, for it does not seem possible he could ever speak a cross word. When she hears, still in confidence, about the "girl he was so much in love with two years ago and was going to marry," she feels twinges of vague jealousy and she wants to be alone.

He too may suffer from the early stages of family interference if his mother begins her maternal vivisection of his wife. She doubts if she will prove a good housekeeper, but "of course we have to hope for the best."

Soon the family may begin a campaign of education on how she should manage him. She hears with irritation the words: "You surely won't let him smoke in the parlor! You know you can never get the odor out of the curtains and that cigarette paper drinks in smoke like blotting paper absorbs ink." If she weakly assents they increase the dose; if she rebels they think she is overconfident and setting her right becomes more than a pleasure—it is a duty. "Never permit him to be five minutes late at dinner. Just assert your independence" is the next shot from this peace-congress in the interests of domestic war.

The husband may return home in the evening and find the wife nervous, irritable, brimful of suggested new arrangements in the home and repairs that he might make in his manners and disposition. She does not tell him who has been there all afternoon but he knows it as absolutely from the traces left in her conversation, as the hunter reads the passing of a bear from tracks in the snow.

She may later tell him of a change to be made in one of the rooms and she unwisely names the member of her family who made the motion; or he to sustain a position may repeat some criticism his mother made. They are planting seeds of discord in each other's minds, unconsciously stimulating prejudice and opposition and intensifying family interference.

As the days go on critical appropriation from the family committee on interference may grow harder and harder to bear. It is depressing to live under the microscope of criticism, like an impaled insect. There is often condemnation where, if the full facts were known, there would be only praise.

There is altogether too much judging in the world, too much idle intrusive censorship of the acts of others. It is uncomfortable to hear constantly that "you ought to do this" or "you should certainly do that." It is so easy to solve the conundrums of another's life.

The reason that advice is usually of little value is that it is not based on a perfect knowledge of the infinity of detail that makes up a condition. Perfect advice should fit the situation as a glove fits the hand; most advice does not get much nearer than a boxing glove in the matter of fitting.

That the family interference may arise from genuine interest does not excuse it nor even explain it; where love is greatest it should be most tender and most considerate. There are times when some tiny flame of misunderstanding arises between husband and wife that a breath of kindly interpretation might blow into nothingness, but, talked over by the family and canvassed and debated and intensified, grows into a conflagration.

Under the gossip, often unthinking of its evil influence, a tiny moloch of difficulty may become an almost impassable Rocky Mountain range. Oil is a good thing to pour on troubled waters but it is poor to put out a fire. A difficulty that originally concerned only a duet now has been made to affect the whole family choir. It is easier for two people to reach loving harmony than to distribute it among a dozen.

Sometimes the interference of families becomes even more active and aggressive than this, and because of a fancied grievance or a genuine opposition it actually comes between husband and wife and by harsh criticism or condemnation seeks to incite strife and discord between them. Here instant loyalty of the one to the other should assert itself and refuse to listen to the voice. In an instinctive spirit of protection there should be a calm, dignified protest against the recital of what if unessential should never be spoken, and if of serious import should be heard only in the presence of the one thus charged with what he or she should have the opportunity of denying or disproving instantly, before the weeds of suspicion have time to root themselves in the heart of the other.

In many homes, there is some one in the family, on either side, whose visits bring a trail of sadness, sorrow, protest, bitter opposition, an unnecessary and unwarrantable intrusion of a discordant element tending to worry, irritate and perhaps even to bring into inharmonious husband and wife. In this delicate situation it often seems a problem how best to act. The health and happiness of the home must be considered as of first and greatest importance. If it be but a trivial inconvenience or jar to the domestic serenity, the wisdom of tolerance for a time should be manifested.

If it be of more serious menace, impossible to master by patient bearing, the privilege of hospitality should not be strained beyond the bearing point. There is a moment when sacrifice ceases to be a virtue and degenerates into cowardice, vice. There may be an injustice to oneself and to one near and dear that this unwelcome guest-hood outrages. It is not true hospitality to mask the heart's continued protest under a smile, to submit unnecessarily to an atmosphere that saps one's mental and moral vitality, that dulls energy, dreads one's finer sensibility, and kills the joy of life, leaving one worried, weak, worn and weary, unable to meet as one should the questions of every-day living.

If we constantly suffer injustice that we can remove, we are slaves to the individuality of another and towards to our own. The rankling irritation of the unjust bearing, if continued, will permeate our whole nature, like an emotional poison. We should therefore not calmly, wisely, with kindness and dignity, and frankly recognize conditions and with perfect fairness take the gentlest action that will remedy them. Better a short, decisive battle fought to a finish than a constant series of petty squabbles and skirmishes.

We cannot be just to others if we are unjust to ourselves. If one lives ever under the scepter of the decision of others, it is not free life—it is slavery. One cannot keep emotion constantly corked up; some time that cork will come out—perhaps inopportunist. True love, true companionship, true living, can reign in the home only as there is in the home an atmosphere of liberty, of individual freedom in its highest sense.

If there be interference from outside forces, whether they be from the family or others, that tends to blight the joy, rest, peace and calm of the home, that threatens to bring in even the thin edge of the wedge of discord between husband and wife—that interference should be silenced forever. The home should be a sanctuary of refuge, not a battle ground of discord; it should be a place where the angel of love ever swings the censor of peace, and calm, and happiness.

Minnows Are Good to Eat.
A correspondent asks—Are the little fishes called minnows good to eat?—We do not know of any reason why they should not be edible. They are of cleanly habits, free from impurities, and though small, quite meaty. Old Isak Walton in his Angler describes the minnows and says: "In the spring they make of them excellent minnow tansies, for being washed well in salt, or their heads and tails cut off, and their guts taken out, and not washed after, they prove excellent for that use, that is being fried with yolks of eggs. The flowers of cowslips and of primroses and a little tansy thus used, they make a dainty bit of meat."

The popular English dish of whitebait is much like minnows, but its edibility all depends on its preparation and manner of cooking. The minnow should not be despised as an article of food merely because it is so small. What Isak Walton called a tansy was an old-fashioned name of a little stew, or meat pie.—Exchange.

When the Tide Turns.
When you get into a tight place, and everything goes against you, till it seems as if you couldn't hold on a minute longer, never give up then, for it is just longer, never give up then, for it is just the place and time the tide will turn.—Harriet Beecher Stowe.



1—Types of German war prisoners employed in building camps for the American troops in France. 2—English women, wearing protective masks, filling gas shells in a munition factory. 3—American steamship Luckenbach which was sunk by a German submarine three hours after destroying a U-boat with gun fire. 4—Miss Ann Morgan, sister of J. P. Morgan, who has been decorated by the French minister of agriculture for her work in the rebuilding of ruined villages in the Alsine district.

AMERICAN AND CANADIAN SOLDIERS FRATERNIZE IN PARIS



American and Canadian soldiers fraternizing in one of the boulevard cafes of Paris. They always enjoy themselves in the French capital when on leave.

ENGLISH SEND TANK TO THE UNITED STATES HORSE, ALSO, HAS GAS MASK



A British tank which but a short time ago was waddling across No Man's land in France has arrived in the United States with its crew of eight, all of whom have seen active service with the British land monsters on the western front. It was sent by the courtesy of the British government to be used as a war exhibit and is here shown being unloaded at a New York port. The portrait is of Capt. Richard Halgh, commander of the tank crew, who has been wounded twice and was awarded the military medal.

GERMAN TRENCH MORTAR MADE OF WOOD



This big German trench mortar was captured by the Canadian troops in a recent advance near Lens. It is made of wood and bound with strong wire.

MUCH IN LITTLE

A rowboat for light service has been invented which can be taken apart in three pieces for carting and shipping. The government of the Philippines is trying to restore the coffee industry of the islands by distributing seed brought from Africa. There is a tradition which declares that the post Ben Jonson once walked all the way from London to Marlborough, near Marlborough, to see a visit to the great dramatist.

Several native plants that yield fibers suitable for textiles have been found by an Argentine government committee.

The making of stereoscopic photographs of minute objects with a molecular microscope is the purpose of a new camera.

Green suitcases have replaced white ones among British hospital surgeons, and British hospital air also being filled with green, instead of white, because the latter is easier on the eyes of the patients.

WASHINGTON CITY SIDELIGHTS

Marriage Bureau Official "Raps" Modern Wives

WASHINGTON.—The ever increasing number of lunchrooms in Washington which keep open day and night and where the hungry rush and devour food in record time has set Col. William A. Kroll, marriage bureau clerk of the District, to thinking on the subject. Colonel Kroll is deeply interested in the question of marriage and the resultant establishment of households and the raising of families. Colonel Kroll himself is a married man and is the father of children and knows all the blessings that flow from a real home where home cooking is the order of the day. Quick lunchrooms do not particularly appeal to him.

"It has always been my impression that when a man gets married he settles down in his own little home and that this place presided over by his wife should have such a thing as a kitchen, or at least kitchenette, where she may practice her culinary accomplishments to the delectation of her loving spouse.

"The large number of quick lunchrooms in this city which are increasing with alarming speed everywhere leads me to believe that the art of home cooking is much neglected and that more men prefer to seek his favorite lunchroom haunt to still the pangs of hunger to the well-meant cuisine of his other half.

"One should think that with a record year for marriage licenses such as this, there should be a correspondingly large number of new homes, but such does not seem to be the case.

"The great number of new lunchrooms signify to me the lack of interest on the part of the wives or boarding house keepers in that most important of all functions—the proper feeding of those entrusted to their keeping.

"Instead of taking up the study of typewriting, music, law or other branches of learning prospective brides should take up a course of domestic science along lines laid down by Mr. Hoover. I am sure this would prove more satisfactory to their husbands and the nation would benefit thereby."

Military Officers Welcome Active Duty Call

THOSE nice easy jobs in the offices of the war department, that looked so tempting to regular army officers in times of peace, are not nearly so popular now. There is not an officer happier than he who has been transferred from some desk in the department to active service, either at some big army cantonment here, or—more luckily—with Pershing "over there."

And not a few of the men who have been familiar figures in the war department offices here for some time have gone.

Take Maj. Gen. Hugh L. Scott, for instance, retired as chief of staff, and now an officer of the line. He's doing active duty—just "somewhere" because one can't discuss secret orders. The mobile division of the general staff lived up to its name. It's been so mobile that most of the men in room 218—the office of the division—are gone, among them Col. Robert L. Mitchell, Col. G. B. Duncan, Maj. Douglas MacArthur, Maj. Dennis Nolan, Mitchell is at a New York cantonment; Duncan is in France; MacArthur will soon follow him there with the Rainbow division, and Nolan is intelligence officer at Pershing's headquarters.

Among others already gone are: From the office of chief of the militia bureau, Maj. Gen. William A. Mann, Brigadier General Melvor and Brig. Gen. C. P. Summerall.

From the office of the adjutant general, Maj. Gen. William M. Wright, Brig. Gen. G. W. Reed and Brig. Gen. Peyton March.

Others from the general staff: Maj. Gen. Joseph E. Kuhn, Maj. Gen. C. G. Treat and Francis J. Kernan.

From the office of the judge advocate general, General Crowder himself, who is now completing the mobilization of the draft army; Col. Blanton W. Ship, J. J. Mayes and William Bethel.

National Capital Has Become Cosmopolitan City

WAR time in Washington! Who has failed to observe the marked change in the atmosphere of this city in the past six months, a gradual transformation, imperceptible while going on, until one suddenly realizes, "Why, what a national Washington; shall it be called a world Washington?"

One seeking to analyze in what the change consists is impressed first by the fact that some of these "magnificent distances" are becoming populated with animated throngs. On F street, Pennsylvania avenue, Ninth, Seventh, G and H streets it is distinctly noticeable. The pedestrian finds himself in numerous company. Moreover, it is observed that people move with quicker step the leisurely walking Washingtonian of yore is a bit jostled about. If one is taking the air on the splendid avenue of the Northwest he is again conscious of a bustle, more bustling city. There is almost a continuous procession of motorcars of every description and the sidewalks are thronged. No, the writer is not going to say anything about "gay equippages" nor even "mettlesome bays." At certain hours may still be seen an old-time family brougham, and the dignified colored driver, looking disgustedly at the new cars, but for the most part it is jittiness to limousine.

It is a wondrously beautiful Washington on a crisp autumn day, the city's physical loveliness enhanced by the air of gaiety lent by the moving crowds, by the ever-present uniforms of the military, by the hundreds of flags snapping in the bright sunshine and by a certain air of well-being which has ever distinguished Washington from cities where the seamy side borders close upon the velvet and purple.

Both man and horse now wear gas masks at the front. The troopers in the front trenches long ago found the masks a necessary protection against the poisonous fumes blown over from the German trenches, but it is only recently that protection of the same sort has been devised for the horses used at the front, though they are as susceptible as their masters to poison gases.

Uncle Sam Keeps a Record of All in Uniform

A SMALL army of clerks, operating files covering 40,000 square feet of floor space, soon will be employed by the statistical division of the war department to keep the individual record of every man wearing Uncle Sam's uniform. Announcement of the details of this gigantic filing system forcibly brings home the fact that American soldiers will be killed, wounded, and imprisoned in Europe.

The main purpose of the statistics is to provide an accurate means of checking casualty reports. Incidentally, however, the complete army history of the men will be recorded.

Maj. J. J. Jones has charge of the central office in Washington. Another will be established in Europe. Weekly reports will be made to central office by divisional bureaus, which in turn will receive information from three members of each regiment, specially detailed to the work.

Two filing systems will be maintained. One, containing in alphabetical order the names of every man in the service, has been instituted to serve as a check in referring to the regimental files.

The record of each man will contain the name and address of his nearest relative, to serve as an aid to prompt transmission of cables reports of death and serious illness. The war department also will undertake to give relatives reports of military funerals, location of burial places, and information concerning Americans held in enemy prison camps.

IN A NUTSHELL

A flexible steering wheel shaft for automobiles has been invented by a Frenchman.

There is a market for fans that could be operated without electricity at Adam Smith.

Use Cold Green. Mrs. Baker—What do you think of the green suitcases? Mrs. Green—They are the same as the white ones, only they are green.

T. Harold Reynolds, Turner Park, Mass., picked a bunch of 200 clovers on one lawn recently.

A Russian inventor has patented a hydraulic press with a screw-driven roller which repairs the shape of the wheel.

Seaweed dries and improves from the water in which it is soaked.